

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE NEWSLETTER



Photograph by Akisuke Shibata. Copyright Rekuonji.

THE AMY LEE PRIZE

Deadlines are drawing close for submission to the first Amy Lee Annual Prizewinning Essay Award in Comparative Literature. Graduate students teaching in the COM 1-4 series should select and submit essays to Mandy Bachman by May 15. Instructors should choose essays surpassing the usual criteria for an A, and should normally submit no more than one essay per quarter for consideration.

The prize was instituted on November 12, 2007 in memory of Amy Lee, a graduate student of Comparative Literature who died in September of that year. Amy was a passionate teacher and a dedicated scholar, and this prize is intended to reward the type of superlative students she loved to teach. This contest will reward outstanding undergraduate essayists in the COM 1-4 courses with a \$100 annual prize, and the winning essay will be printed in the next edition of the Newsletter and archived on the program's website as an "Amy Lee Prizewinning Essay in Comparative Literature."



Faculty, alumni, and students:

Welcome to the program!

Teaching Prizes

The instructors and graduate students of Comparative Literature are passionate about teaching, and the University has recognized that dedication this year with some of its most prestigious teaching awards.

PhD candidate Fei Shi won the competitive Professors For the Future fellowship, a yearlong fellowship designed to encourage future teachers. As part of his project, Fei is proposing a series of workshops designed to help international graduate students understand how to teach, apply for funding, participate in conferences, and publish their research within the American university system.

Professor Brenda Schildgen was awarded the UC Davis Prize for Undergraduate Teaching and Scholarly Achievement, a \$40,000 reward given in honor of her exemplary teaching skills. The annual award may be the largest monetary prize in the nation for undergraduate teaching, and this year it goes to a professor who has consistently received top marks from her students, including two classes with perfect student evaluations.

Professor Gail Finney won a Distinguished Teaching Award for her work teaching graduate students. The award, organized by the Academic Senate, was handed out by the Chancellor at an awards dinner where, in fine Comparative Literature tradition, Prof. Finney drew an analogy from German etymology between dissertation directors and proud parents.

DHI Fellowship

Kari Lokke has won a fellowship from the Davis Humanities Institute and will participate in the 2008-2009 Davis Hu-

manities Faculty Research Seminar on "Science and the Sacred." Her project, "Esoteric Enthusiasm: Nineteenth-Century Science in *Frankenstein*, *Zanoni* and *The Lifted Veil*," explores nineteenth-century literary legacies of the "sacred sciences" of the occult Enlightenment: spiritualism, physiognomy, clairvoyance, alchemy, Illuminism. With reference to these pseudoscientific discourses, "Esoteric Enthusiasm" examines representations of the destructive potentialities of the fanatical pursuit and deification of scientific knowledge in novels by Mary Shelley, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and George Eliot. This essay is part of a book she is currently writing on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European conceptions of religious and political fanaticism.

New Peer Advisor

Megan Macklin, Comparative Literature's peer advisor for the past year, is abroad in Argentina for her final term at Davis. She's currently in Mendoza, Argentina living with a homestay family and studying Spanish.

"I decided to study abroad this term (my last!) as kind of an homage to my undergraduate career," she says. "For me, this is my way to end college with a bang, and my time here [in Argentina] serves as a culmination of all the learning experiences I have met thus far. What better way to learn another language, another culture, another self?" She added that she hopes "this journey will mark the beginning of many adventures to come, beyond U.C. Davis."

She has been replaced for the spring term by Caitlin Kelly-Sneed, who is holding office hours Monday 3-4 p.m. and Thursday 12-1 p.m. in 314 Sproul.

The Advantages of Web Publishing

Ever wonder if publishing in graduate student journals is worth the time and effort you put into it? In the last year of my Masters program, I was extremely busy writing my thesis and applying to grad school, so the last thing on my mind was trying to publish an article. However, after a little pressure from friends, I submitted my article, "Folly or Fantasy? A Look at Polyphony in Francophone Literature," to Portals, our graduate journal at San Francisco State University. The article was accepted and published online in June of 2005. Little did I know that this published article would open a door to a future speaking engagement.

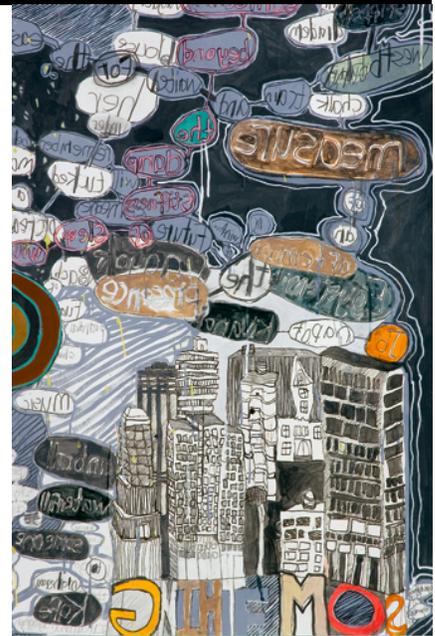
Three years later, in February of this year, I received an e-mail from Alliance Française in San Francisco. Their event planner wanted to organize a series of speakers for the month of March relating to the francophone community and language issues. She happened to come across my article on San Francisco State University's website and wondered if I would be interested in giving a one-hour

lecture. She said I could speak on the topic of my choice as long as it related to their theme. Of course, I accepted!

The lecture turned out to be one of the most pleasant experiences of my career so far. I chose to speak about the cultural and literary movements of Martinique: Négritude, Antillanité, and Créolité. I ended my talk by giving a detailed analysis of Patrick Chamoiseau's use of code switching in his novel, *Chronique des sept misères* and showed how this polyphonic novel demonstrated the essence of the Créolité movement.

The talk went very well and I had the pleasure of meeting a wonderful group of people from the Caribbean. The leader told me that he was amazed to hear someone speaking about La Créolité in California! So, if you're wondering whether or not to send an article to a graduate student journal, don't hesitate...you never know what door that article will open, especially if it is published on cyberspace.

by Elisabeth Lore. This article is available from the Portals online journal at <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals>.



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For more info, please visit the Comparative Literature website at <http://complit.ucdavis.edu>.



Comp Lit at Play: On the rare occasions that Comparative Literature grad students find themselves away from their work, they know how to have a good time. *Top Left:* Rune Christenson and Christina Schiesari play pool. *Above:* Fei Shi gets the hang of this "skating" thing. *Right:* Natalie Strobach has it down, though. *Left:* Mike Graziano, Chris Tong, Natalie Strobach, and Elisabeth Lore are joined by Megan McMullan at a performance by Davis professors-cum-jazz-ensemble Black Cat Bone.

